



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 28, 2021

Contact: Mark Calaguas
FALA Chicago President
Email: info@falachicago.org

FALA CHICAGO ANNOUNCES PRO BONO POWERS OF ATTORNEY SERVICES FOR HEALTHCARE FRONTLINERS AND ESSENTIAL WORKERS

(Chicago, IL) - The Filipino American Lawyers Association of Chicago (FALA Chicago) is pleased to announce the expansion of its pro bono clinic, AGiLA (“Attorneys Giving Legal Advice”) with a campaign to provide powers of attorney to healthcare frontliners and essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Launched in partnership with Chicago Volunteer Legal Services (CVLS) during the spring of 2018, AGiLA is the first and only pro bono legal clinic in the Midwest dedicated to delivering efficient legal aid to clients of limited means, with targeted outreach to underserved members of the Filipino American community.

The powers of attorney service is a direct recognition of the pandemic’s disproportionate impact on Filipino Americans, who notably make up 4% of registered nurses in the U.S. but according to a [September 2020 report](#) from National Nurses United, have accounted for almost a third of COVID-19 related nursing deaths. Despite putting themselves at great personal risk every day on the job, many healthcare frontliners and essential workers, especially those of immigrant backgrounds, have yet to determine how decisions about their own healthcare will be made in the event they are incapacitated. With its team of trained volunteers, FALA Chicago hopes to make these notoriously difficult conversations easier for clients and their families.

Starting in May, online appointments may be booked by signing up at falachicago.org/probono. In-person consultation and notary services will also be offered once a month, every third Saturday from 1-3pm at Instituto del Progreso Latino at 2520 S. Western Avenue in Chicago. If an individual requires more complex estate planning counseling, FALA Chicago can also provide referrals to attorneys with expert backgrounds in this area of law.

In preparation for the powers of attorney campaign, FALA Chicago and CVLS presented a [webinar](#) on March 28 titled, “Who Cares for the Caregiver? A Crash Course on Powers of Attorney.” The online panel, which featured Reynard Tanig (FALA Chicago board member and partner, Harrison Held) and Dr. Aprilfaye Manalang (Professor in Interdisciplinary Studies, Norfolk State University), discussed the basics of powers of attorney and examined various

cultural factors to consider when counseling Filipino clients in their estate planning choices. The program also included a presentation by journalist/filmmaker Alicia Soller, who shared a preview of her timely documentary on Filipino healthcare workers in the pandemic. “It is a source of pride for myself as a Filipino to know that so many of the heroes of this pandemic were also Filipino. However, it is tragic to hear about so many deaths in our community. My hope is that our legal profession can give our heroes some legal protections as a small token of our appreciation for the sacrifices they made to take care of those suffering from COVID-19,” said Janice Dantes, FALA Chicago legal clinic director and immediate past president.

“As a bar organization, FALA Chicago has prided itself in being a home base for Filipino American lawyers and law students, many of whom are the first in their families to enter the legal profession in the United States,” said FALA Chicago president Mark Calaguas. “The establishment of the AGiLA clinic three years ago enabled us to use our skills and expertise to help our own community members assert their rights in a legal system that is oftentimes costly to access and intimidating to navigate. We believe this new powers of attorney initiative is a much needed addition to our current pro bono offerings. FALA Chicago is excited to roll out these services as part of the National Filipino American Lawyers Association’s wider pro bono efforts and we hope this launch can serve as a model for our fellow Filipino American bar organizations contemplating similar campaigns elsewhere across the country.”

FALA Chicago thanks the following community partners for their logistical and promotional support of the AGiLA powers of attorney program: [Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment \(AFIRE\)](#), [Chicago Volunteer Legal Services](#), [Dantes Law Firm](#), [Instituto del Progreso Latino](#), [Live Every Second \(L.E.S.\)](#), [Philippine Nurses Association of Illinois \(PNAI\)](#), and [Pilipino Unity for Progress \(UniPro\) – Chicago](#).

###

The Filipino American Lawyers Association of Chicago (FALA Chicago) is a professional network of attorneys, judges, law students, and supporters that facilitates career development, learning opportunities, and fellowship within the Chicagoland legal community. For more information, visit our website at falachicago.org.